

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 ISO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 /021 R

DRAFTED BY S:LSEAGLEBURGER:ML
APPROVED BY S - MR. EAGLEBURGER
S/S -O: R. ELTZ

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O 152135Z FEB 75 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 035782

TOSEC 359

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)
SUBJECT: AP TICKER ON LETTER TO EDITOR OF HARPER'S

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AP TICKER RE YOUR LETTER TO EDITOR
OF HARPER'S:

2. BEGIN TEXT SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER HAS
TAKEN STRONG OBJECTION TO AN ATTACK ON HIM BY JOURNALIST
AND FORMER WHITE HOUSE AIDE WILLIAM SAFIRE IN THE MARCH
ISSUE OF HARPER'S.

IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "PUPPET AS PRINCE," SAFIRE QUOTED
FROM WHAT HE CALLED THE "FOURTH AND FINAL DRAFT" OF A
STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY MADE TO SOVIET LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV
DURING PRESUMMIT MEETINGS IN 1972.

IT REFERRED TO THE WAR IN VIETNAM, AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH
CHINA AND BILATERAL RELATIONS AND TRADE AND SAID IN PART:

"...AS PRESIDENT (RICHARD NIXON) IS BOUND TO BE KEENLY
SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT OUR LAST PRESIDENT WAS FORCED
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TO VACATE HIS OFFICE BECAUSE OF THE AFFECTS OF THE VIETNAM

WAR, PRESIDENT NIXON WILL NOT PERMIT THREE PRESIDENTS TO LEAVE OFFICE UNDER ABNORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES."

COMMENTING ON THIS, SAFIRE WROTE THAT "THIS STRAIGHT-FROM-THE-SHOULDER TALK; THE REFERENCES TO THE U.S. POLITICAL SCENE WERE OF QUESTIONABLE PROPRIETY SINCE CONTINUANCE IN OFFICE SHOULD HARDLY BE THE REASON FOR A U.S. LEADER'S REACTION TO A FOREIGN POWER'S MILITARY OFFENSIVE."

IN A LETTER TO HARPER'S DATED FEB. 9, KISSINGER SAID, "MR. SAFIRE QUOTES EXTENSIVELY FROM A STATEMENT HE CONTENDS I MADE TO GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV DURING THE APRIL 18-22 MEETINGS IN PREPARATION FOR THE NIXON-BREZHNEV SUMMIT LATER THAT MONTH.

"THERE IS BUT ONE PROBLEM: I NEVER MADE THE STATEMENT . . . I DID FIND A CLASSIFIED DRAFT STATEMENT, PREPARED FOR ME BY THE STAFF, WHICH IS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THE MATERIAL MR. SAFIRE SO KNOWINGLY REPEATS . . ."

"UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE VERACITY OF MR. SAFIRE'S ACCOUNT AND THE POINT HE IS TRYING TO MAKE, HOWEVER, I DID NOT FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF MY STAFF. IN FACT, I TOOK QUITE A DIFFERENT LINE WHEN I TALKED WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL."

KISSINGER ALSO DENIED THAT HE DISCUSSED THE WHEAT DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS AS SAFIRE INDICATED.

"CONTRARY TO HIS IMPLICATION, I DID NOT SEE PREMIER KOSYGIN ON THE SOVIET TRIP IN QUESTION, NOR WAS THE WHEAT DEAL DISCUSSED BY ME WITH OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS DURING THAT OR LATER VISITS TO MOSCOW, OR FOR THAT MATTER ANYWHERE ELSE. THE WHEAT DEAL WAS HANDLED BY OTHER AGENCIES," KISSINGER SAID.

HE ALSO CITED SAFIRE'S CLAIM THAT HE ENLISTED WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN RON NESSEN TO SAY THAT NIXON COULD NOT ACHIEVE THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT IN THREE YEARS WHILE FORD DID IT IN THREE MONTHS.

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"THAT STATEMENT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A VICIOUS CANARD," KISSINGER WROTE. "MR. NESSEN'S STATEMENT WAS

MADE ON AIR FORCE ONE ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE FAR EAST; I WAS . . . THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM THE EVENT. WHEN I LEARNED OF THE STATEMENT, I IMMEDIATELY ASKED THAT THE WHITE HOUSE ISSUE A RETRACTION, WHICH IT DID . . ."

AND SO THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, LET ME STATE FOR

THE RECORD THAT I AM CONVINCED THAT FORMER PRESIDENT
NIXON'S WORK ON SALT . . . LAID THE BASIS FOR THE
VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT, AND THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT
HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE PROGRESS PREISDENT NIXON
HAD EARLIER ACHIEVED." END TEXT INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE035782
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LSEAGLEBURGER:ML
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750056-0290
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750238/aaaabhwg.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AP TICKER ON LETTER TO EDITOR OF HARPER'S FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: BONN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006